

Message Text

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NASA FOR TERRELL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TSPA, UNGA, UR
SUBJECT: UN OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE - SOVIET COMMENTS
ON OUTER SPACE ISSUES

REF: USUN 2829

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET (INTERKOSMOS) VIEWS ON RECENTLY
CONCLUDED UN OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE (OSC) MEETINGS REFLEC
LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR A MOON TREATY AND UN CONFERENCE
ON OUTER SPACE, AND LITTLE HOPE FOR EARLY RESOLUTION OF
DIRECT BROADCASTING AND REMOTE SENSING ISSUES.

2. DURING JULY 12 SCICOUNS CALL AT INTERKOSMOS, VICE
CHAIRMAN VERESHCHETIN OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON
RESULTS OF JUNE 26 - JULY 7 OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE (OSC)
MEETING. WHILE VERESHCHETIN DID NOT ATTEND OSC AND
CLAIMED HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED THE FULL REPORT OF THE
MEETING, HE SAID INTERKOSMOS PROVIDED TECHNICAL BACK-UP
FOR MFA AND UN SOVDEL AND WAS FULLY COORDINATED ON ALL
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MAJOR ISSUES.

- OVERALL ASSESSMENT: SINCE NO PROGRESS WAS REGISTERED
ON DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITES AND REMOTE SENSING, WHICH
VERESHCHETIN TERMED THE ONLY MAJOR ISSUES OF DIRECT AND
IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO THE US, AND THE USSR, THE OSC
MEETING COULD HARDLY BE TERMED SUCCESSFUL. HE STATED

THE POSITIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES ON THESE ISSUES WERE AS FAR APART AS EVER.

- MOON TREATY: THE SOVIETS SEE LITTLE NEED FOR A MOON TREATY AT PRESENT, SINCE BOTH THE USSR AND US (THE ONLY NATIONS CAPABLE OF EXPLOITING MOON RESOURCES) HAVE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR RETURNING TO THE MOON. FURTHERMORE THE SOVIETS HAVE AS LITTLE TASTE FOR THE "COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND" LANGUAGE IN THE DRAFT MOON TEXT AS THEY HAVE FOR THIS CONCEPT IN LAW OF THE SEA. SOVIETS SEE THE "COMMON HERITAGE" FORMULA AS AN UNDESIRABLE PRECEDENT FOR LDC CLAIMS ON THE GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT, WHICH IS OF NEARER CONCERN TO THE US AND USSR. AS A LAWYER, VERESHCHETIN POSED THE QUESTION "WHO SPEAKS FOR MANKIND?"

3. UN CONFERENCE ON OUTER SPACE: THE SOVIETS WERE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROPOSALS FOR A SECOND UN CONFERENCE ON OUTER SPACE. THERE WERE ENOUGH FORA ALREADY IN EXISTENCE FOR DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES, AND CREATION OF ANOTHER WOULD ONLY PROVIDE NEW PLATFORM FOR THE LDCS TO PUT FORTH MORE "COMMON HERITAGE" DEMANDS. HE STATED IT IS IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST OF THE US AND USSR TO DOWNPLAY THE CONFERENCE.

4. NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES: VERESHCHETIN REFUSED TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DRAWN OUT ON WHAT COMMITMENTS THE SOVIETS MADE AT OSC MEETING ON SAFETY STUDIES OR REPORTS OF MALFUNCTIONS, OR EVEN WHETHER THE SOVIETS CONSIDER NUCLEAR POWER SATELLITES TO POSE A SERIOUS SAFETY PROBLEM. HE CONFINED HIS REMARKS TO SUCH BARBS AS "CANADA - WITH US HELP - MADE A GREAT FUSS ABOUT COSMOS 954. WE DID NOT HEAR A PEEP WHEN THE US NUCLEAR POWER SATELLITE MALFUNCTIONED."

5. COMMENT: VERESHCHETIN, WHO WAS VISIBLY SOURED DURING MEETING BY LACK OF PROGRESS ON BILATERAL SPACE COOPERATION (REPORTED SEPTTEL), HAS PERHAPS MORE DARKLY NUANCED HIS ASSESSMENTS OF OSC ISSUES, PARTICULARLY OF NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES, THAN WARRANTED. HOWEVER, HE IS AN EXPERIENCED AND ASTUTE OBSERVER OF INTERNATIONAL SPACE MATTERS, AND WE BELIEVE THE BASIC POSITIONS HE EXPRESSED ACCURATELY REFLECT CURRENT SOVIET THINKING. MATLOCK

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